



ELEMENT ONE: BUILD CROSS-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS & CLARIFY ROLES

Key cross-agency partners at the local and state levels are engaged, agree to a shared vision, and gain support from political leaders. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and formalized.

A career pathway system cannot be developed without strong, cross-agency partnerships at the local and state levels. Each partner ensures that the system operates to serve local labor market demands and the needs of the workforce. Together, state and local partners work collaboratively to establish a vision and policies at the state level while implementing career pathway programs and services at the local level.

The expertise necessary for designing successful education and training programs is dispersed across different arenas; strong working partnerships are what allow that expertise to be shared, leveraged, and effectively applied. Economists and employers share knowledge drawn from labor market information, career trainers and advisors design effective workforce training methods, educators provide instructional strategies, and social service providers contribute knowledge of support services and career counseling.

Successful partnerships also make it possible to leverage resources across systems and from different sources.

Developing a career pathways system begins with building cross-agency partnerships and involves several key steps described in depth on the following pages:

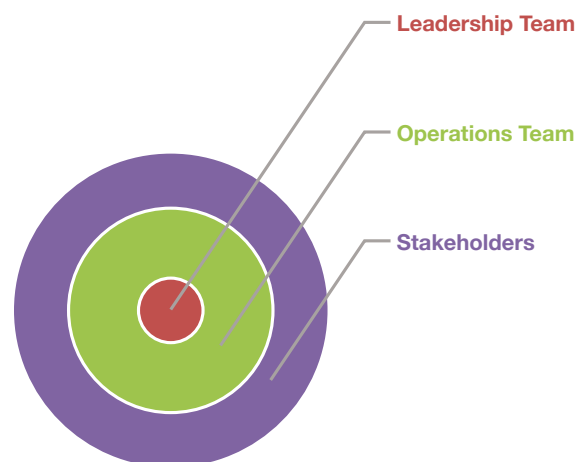
- Engage a team of cross-agency partners at the state and local levels.
- Establish a shared vision, mission, set of goals, and plan.
- Identify an intermediary to coordinate day-to-day collaboration.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of all partners.
- Clarify the working relationship between state and local partners.

ENGAGE A TEAM OF CROSS-AGENCY PARTNERS AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS

A comprehensive career pathways system requires participation at many different levels. At the core, a diverse group of representatives from state and local public agencies, private

and non-profit organizations, and employers and members of the business community join together as a leadership team to guide the process of developing the career pathways system. They model interagency collaboration, craft and implement common goals, and develop a shared vision of how career pathways can benefit the local community and its citizens. This leadership team engages additional partner representatives to form an operations team responsible for designing, implementing, and operating the career pathways education and training programs. Other partners become stakeholders that support the career pathways work. As the career pathways system continually develops and changes, partners may move back and forth among the roles as needed.

The following diagram describes the various roles of the partners within the complete system.



For the career pathways system to be successful, senior state, and local leaders, including state and local elected officials support the leadership team by actively endorsing and championing the initiative through their actions, funding, and legislation.

See how Tucson Indian Center launched a successful healthcare career pathway in one year with strong partnerships and little start-up resources in the **promising practice**, on the next page.



PROMISING PRACTICE FROM NOTHING TO SOMETHING—TUCSON INDIAN CENTER

The **Tucson Indian Center (TIC)** began its career pathways work from scratch. Prior to launching the effort in 2010, little work had been undertaken around career pathways in the region. After receiving \$30K grant and technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, within one year, TIC developed a functioning career pathways system offering an occupational career ladder in Behavioral Health. The grant catalyzed the formation of the **Native American Pathways Out of Poverty Network (NAOPN)**, made up of the Tucson Indian Center (TIC), Pima County One Stop (PCOS), Pima Community College (PCC), employers (University Physicians Health-care and Desert Diamond Casino), and the local

tribal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs for the Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe. Incorporating direct employer feedback from local hospitals and mental health organizations, the team created a pioneering Behavioral Health Technician (BHT) career pathway that provides adults a path that goes all the way from Adult Basic Education at PCC, through a three-tier BHT basic certificate, a BHT advanced certificate, and an Associates Degree in BHT. Recruitment is currently underway for local area residents for the new BHT program, with slots reserved for TIC, Pascua Yaqui, and Tohono O'odham clients. As a testament to its stellar performance, TIC was invited to present its work

to the WIA Section 166 Indian and Native American Program grantees at the western regional and national conferences in spring 2011. The Tucson Indian Center leadership team demonstrated how with intentional partnership building, a little funding can go a long way.

For more information, view the presentation by TIC at the INAP 2011 national conference listed in Section Three: Resources.

State-Level team Members

To be most effective, the state-level representatives on the cross-agency leadership team include, at a minimum, individuals from the state agencies responsible for the following public services:

- Workforce development
- Human services
- Secondary and post-secondary education
- Adult basic education
- Economic development

These *state team* members support the local team and assist in the development of an administrative and regulatory environment that aids local implementation and statewide growth or replication.

Local-level team members

The local-level members on the leadership team are responsible for designing, piloting, launching, and growing a local or regional career pathways system. At a minimum, it is important to have local representatives from the following agencies:

- Workforce Investment Board(s) and local workforce development service provider agencies
- Community college(s) and post-secondary education providers
- Adult education providers
- TANF providers and human service agencies

- Economic development agencies and committees
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Local businesses

Recommended Leadership Team Members A comprehensive leadership team includes representatives from the following entities:	
Workforce Development	State workforce agency State WIB Local WIB Local workforce agencies
Education	State adult education agency State secondary education agency State post-secondary education agency Local adult basic education providers Local secondary education providers Local community colleges Local universities
Human Services	State human service agency Local TANF providers Local human service agencies
CBOs	State community-based organizations State faith-based organizations Local community-based organizations Local faith-based organizations
Employers	Private businesses Public companies
Economic Development	State economic development agency Local economic development agency

See an example of how local and state level career pathway efforts coalesced to support career pathway system development in Oregon in the **promising practice** below.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

For leadership team members to be fully engaged, they are briefed so that they know how effective career pathways systems work, how they will help their customers and organizations meet their respective goals, and how they will benefit the overall community. This training also demonstrates the support for cross-agency collaboration that is being modeled by the system leaders.

Win-win partnerships provide real support for the effort that go beyond token letters of support. To create a win-win partnership, the team will do several things:

- Ensure that all partners understand each other's specific goals, the resources at their disposal, and their program performance measures and requirements. (This can be done by conducting a service mapping session, which is explained more thoroughly below.) Though many of the participating organizations and agencies are trying to achieve similar objectives—such as strengthening the local economy—they measure their progress in different ways. By understanding the core elements of each partner's work, the leadership team can develop a systemic framework that can complement everyone's goals.
- Make sure all partners understand the big picture of developing career pathways. This will help reduce resistance to change and avoid duplication of time and effort.
- Reflect the mission in all career pathway materials and constantly remind partners that the success of the career pathways system depends on the participant outcomes and how well they align with employer demands.
- Clearly communicate expectations of each of the participating partners while also acknowledging the value of their contribution to the overall effort. Partners need to realize the importance and impact of their contributions and receive appreciation for them.
- Use performance data to demonstrate progress and impact. This will also support partner buy-in and reinforce continued engagement over time. When the team regularly reviews

QUICK TIP

TO ENGAGE A TEAM OF CROSS-AGENCY PARTNERS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS:

- Garner support for the initiative among senior or political leaders in the state/region.
- Include all key partners at both the state and local levels.
- Promote agreement to work collaboratively.
- Create and train the team.
- Bring on additional state or local partners as needed as your career pathways system grows and develops.
- Inform system players in the state/region about the career pathways system being developed and implemented.



PROMISING PRACTICE A TEAM EFFORT—OREGON

When local areas make a concerted effort to understand the needs of local employers and the local workforce, they can lead an effort that forms the foundation of a comprehensive, statewide system. **Oregon's** statewide career pathways initiative evolved out of just such a locally based pioneering effort. Beginning in 1999, three community colleges decided to collaborate in designing new education and training programs tailored to meet the needs of the local workforce and the demands of employers. Using seed funding from the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the League of Innovation, the colleges (Portland Community College, Mt. Hood Community College, and Southwestern Oregon Community College) developed programs focused on high-demand occupations.

Based on the success of their first models, they established partnerships with additional organizations and agencies, created additional pathways, and officially formed the **Oregon**

Pathways Alliance (Alliance) in 2004. The Alliance included five community colleges, the state's high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) Network, Department of Education, Employment Department, Department of Human Services, and local WIBs. The Alliance developed a comprehensive systemic framework that helped build capacity and define working relationships not only among the member organizations and within their respective institutions, but also throughout the state. Ensuring that local and state partners regularly garner input and buy-in from everyone involved—including faculty, department chairs, employers, student services staffs, advisory committees, and local WIBs—remains paramount to the Alliance's success.

The success of the Alliance encouraged other departments and colleges to launch similar efforts. By 2005, the Alliance convened an Oregon Pathways Academy for all 17 community college

campuses in the state. The academy brought together state teams from the Department of Education, Employment Department, Department of Human Services, and WIBs. Oregon then established an integrated state agency, the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, to streamline and coordinate multiple funding streams including WIA, funding for vocational education from the Carl Perkins VTEA, and Adult Education. The integrated department provides resources and leadership to the 17 independently funded community colleges and seven local Workforce Investment Areas.

The pioneering spirit, leveraging of resources, and commitment to building and sustaining partnerships helped Oregon become the first state in the country to develop a statewide career pathways system and to become a recognized leader in career pathways initiatives.

For more information visit Worksource Oregon's website listed in Section Three: Resources.

data and compares themselves to benchmarks, partners can make course corrections and are clear that their contributions are adding value.

Team membership is periodically reviewed to ensure that the team includes representatives that support key functions and services within the system. In addition, partnerships are expanded as the group seeks to engage new target populations. For example, if individuals with disabilities are being targeted to participate within the career pathways system, the team reaches out to, and brings on as members, representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation offices and other state and local agencies who serve that population.

The leadership team will not be able to implement the career pathways system without the help of the staff members within the agencies and organizations represented on the leadership and operations teams. Therefore, once the leadership team convenes, it is important to inform all state and local staff members about the career pathways system being developed and implemented. Training multiple agencies' staff together on the new career pathways system will model collaboration and ensure that all staff members learn the same information.

For more information about strategic partnerships, view the Workforce3One webinar here: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/3001107557559061701>

See an example of how local and state level career pathway efforts coalesced to support career pathway system development in Oregon in the **promising practice**, opposite.

ESTABLISH A SHARED VISION, MISSION, SET OF GOALS, AND PLAN

Once the career pathways leadership team is formed, it is important to establish a shared vision and mission aligned with common goals. The vision provides a directional statement and a framework for the team's area of influence and responsibility by describing the desired future state of the community in a way that inspires the team to progress. A mission statement—a brief description of the team's fundamental purpose—helps the team agree on what to work on together. Defining these elements will allow the team to establish an agreed-upon set of goals and develop a plan to guide collaborative work. As the system will evolve over time, the team commits to reviewing and revising the vision, mission, goals, and plans regularly to match changing interests and goals.

Developing a shared vision, mission, and set of goals is no easy task. According to national career pathways expert Julian Alssid, "Developing a career pathways system is really about getting stakeholders—businesses, educational institutions, workforce development and economic development entities, government agencies, community-based organizations and others—to identify a goal or objective that they can all agree to work on together. And that's no small order; given that these groups have different areas of focus, funding priorities, speak different languages and so on."

The leadership team may find it helpful to develop its shared vision and mission during a facilitated strategic planning ses-

QUICK TIP

WHEN CONDUCTING SERVICE MAPPING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, REMEMBER TO:

- Assess the capacity of educational and training institutions
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and gaps within the state and region's education and training programs against meeting sector and industry training needs.
- Assess the wrap around and support service needs
- Assess the capacity of agencies that provide wrap around and support services

sion. The *Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment* tool (see tools section) can help the team form its implementation plan by having it look at progress, priorities, gaps, technical assistance needs, and next steps. The *Next Steps Action Planning* tool will lead the team to aligned, prioritized goals.

DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTNERS

While some agencies provide services to the general population, others may serve only "targeted" populations. It takes a variety of agencies and/or funding streams to provide enough services and products to both targeted and universal populations. Without clearly defined roles and responsibilities, the system can be very confusing, and some responsibilities may be overlooked.

A prerequisite for defining the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners within the career pathways system is shared knowledge of the services each agency provides, the populations it serves, and the service models on which its programs are based.

Community service mapping is a process that your team can use to generate this knowledge. And in doing so, you will produce the data necessary for coordinating services among multiple agencies and identifying funding streams that can support the development of a career pathways system. The service mapping process will allow all parties to understand each others' existing roles and responsibilities. Your team can then develop an operational and strategic plan to be carried out by team members who are assigned functional roles and/or individual task responsibilities. Your team may decide to formalize these relationships with a written agreement or within a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in order to support sustaining relationships over time.

The chart at the bottom of the page outlines some of the common roles and responsibilities assigned to the key partners involved in developing a career pathways system.

IDENTIFY AN INTERMEDIARY TO COORDINATE DAY-TO-DAY COLLABORATION

Development of a career pathways system requires day-to-day, on-the-ground coordinating of cross-system activities and collaboration, often coordinated by one organization or agency. This organization functions as a go-between, or *intermediary*, coordinating the work of all the separate partners. The intermediary takes care of various operational functions identified by leadership team members, such as coordinating and facilitating team meetings and supporting completion of action plans. In a broader sense, the intermediary is responsible for daily thinking about the next steps needed to move the system forward, and therefore needs to stay one step ahead of the leadership team. The intermediary also serves as the system's champion, promoting it to the leadership team, key partner agencies, and the community as a whole.

Early on in the development of your initiative, your team will want to decide which person and/or agency will take lead in coordinating the leadership group activities and assigned tasks involved in carrying out the initiative.

state officials acting in advisory and supporting roles? However the working relationship is defined, it is important to ensure that roles are understood and agreed upon among partners at the state and local levels. Like other partnerships, it may be useful to formalize these relationships with a written agreement or within a memorandum of understanding (MOU). See the **Tool Box** for an MOU that defines one example of a state/local working relationship.

CLARIFY WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERS

In addition to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various collaborating partners, the leadership team may want to define the working relationship between the state-level agencies and the local-level agencies and partners. Are decisions made at the state level, with local officials expected to implement them? Or are most decisions made at the local level, with

Workforce Agencies	Provide labor market information Engage employers Recruit and make referrals Provide support services Assess skills Provide job search assistance Provide job placement services	Educational Institutions and Agencies	Design programs Develop curricula "Chunk" and "modularize" curricula Create links between credit and non-credit Promote portability through articulation agreements Provide support services Assist with financial aid
Economic Development Agencies	Provide labor market information Engage employers	Human Services Agencies	Recruit and make referrals Provide support services Engage employers
Community Based Organizations	Recruit and make referrals Engage employers Provide support services	Employers	Develop curricula Provide trainers/faculty Provide training facilities and equipment Provide employment/internships

Team Tools

See Section Two—*Team Tool How-to Guide* for facilitator instructions for each of the following tools:

Six Key Elements Graphic Framework <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001120641504542734/info>

Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment Tool (printable documents) <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001120642516555109/info>

Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment Tool (online tool) <http://www.mahernet.com/tiki/tiki-login.php>

Six Key Elements Action Planning Tool <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001120642119875739/info>

Service Mapping Tools <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001120642445820802/info>

Reports and Publications

Career Pathways Initiative: Building Cross-Agency Partnerships webinar recording, U.S. Department of Labor and Social Policy Research Associates, March 2011 <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/3001107557559061701>

Sample Partner Agreements <https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001126942046585407/info>